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### NGO Politics and Insurgency: Examining Institutional Structures and Change Processes of NGO Influence

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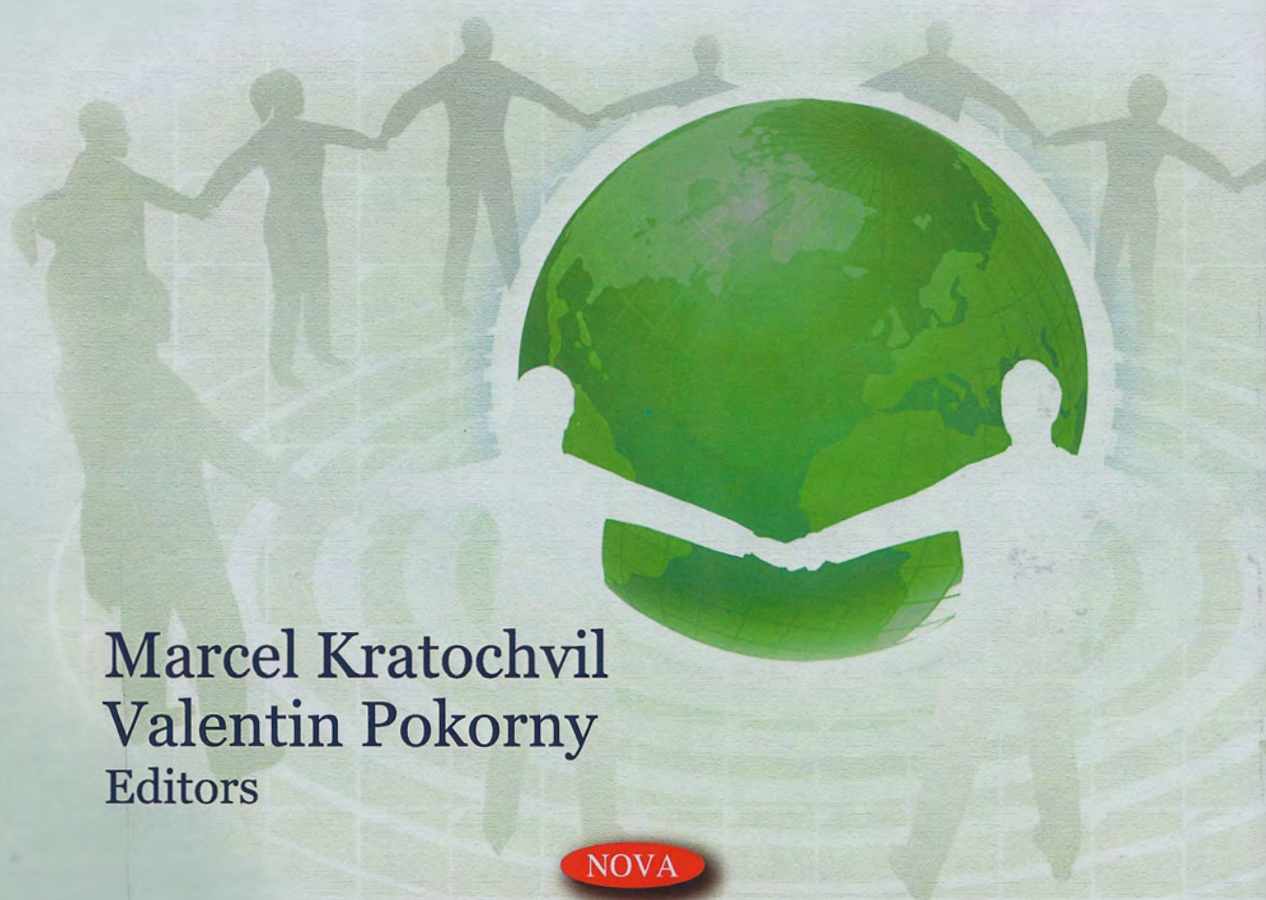
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America in the 21st Century: Political and Economic Issues Series

# Public Administration, NGO's and Public Debt

*Issues and Perspectives*



Marcel Kratochvil  
Valentin Pokorny  
Editors

NOVA



# Public Administration, NGO's and Public Debt

*Issues and Perspectives*

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AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES SERIES

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, NGO'S AND  
PUBLIC DEBT: ISSUES AND  
PERSPECTIVES**

**MARCEL KRATOCHVIL  
AND  
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## Chapter 9

# NGO POLITICS AND INSURGENCY: EXAMINING INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND CHANGE PROCESSES OF NGO INFLUENCE

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## ABSTRACT

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have evolved from simpler organizational forms providing focused relief and services to complex organizations in contemporary times. Making sense of this new complexity requires an analytical framework equal to the complex environments and difficult challenges facing NGOs. In this chapter, we advocate a model of stakeholder politics and insurgency developed from institutional theorizing in organization analysis, extensive studies of social movements in political sociology, and grid-group cultural theory in social anthropology. The framework we advance includes a multi-layered model of institutional structure, including a persistent configuration of institutional logics underlying all social formations, and specific mechanisms for social change relevant for each layer of social structure. We illustrate the utility of our model by considering the lessons for NGOs that can be gleaned from prior empirical studies of comparative policy analysis. Our aspiration is that NGOs can apply our framework, developed from a rich tradition of social and administrative sciences, to strengthen civil society's influence on institutional development.

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## INTRODUCTION

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been a social phenomenon of the twentieth century. NGOs are proliferating around the world and increasing in their diversity and types of activities (Clarke, 1998). NGOs have shifted their focus from the primarily human relief services at their inception to more complicated roles of international development and politics (Iriye, 1999). We argue that modern NGOs are one of numerous stakeholders within a given organizational field striving to exert influence and create message salience in public policy domains. NGOs are well known for their sophistication in using various communication channels to mobilize and motivate people and communities (Nalinakumari & MacLean, 2005). Although many NGOs still fulfill the need of food and medical delivery during times of crisis, overall, NGOs have developed into one of many influential participants contributing to public policy decision-making. Within a given public policy domain, NGOs may be viewed as one of a number of stakeholders influencing and being influenced by the numerous other stakeholders. "Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have in specific been active in recent years. . .and more willing to collaborate with businesses in pursuit of common goals" (Jamali & Keshishian, 2009, p. 277). How can any stakeholder influence public policy? How might partnerships, alliances, and coalitions be formed by likeminded stakeholders to increase message salience? These are important questions, the answers to which have practical implications for the activities and communication practices of NGOs in their attempts to participate in and influence organization fields.

Over the course of this analysis, we will offer two primary arguments. Firstly, the evolution of NGOs and NGO functions from the direct delivery of aid to the more complex and sophisticated efforts of reconciliation and political practice merit a theoretical framework with the power to explain how NGOs might successfully effect change—a framework that begins to recognize NGOs as they currently are, viable organizational structures performing strategic functions and competing for message salience alongside governments, businesses, and other stakeholder groups. Secondly, a theoretical framework generated through the cross-fertilization of multiple academic literatures (primarily stakeholder and social movement literature) and framed through Douglas's (1999) grid-group cultural theory is a useful analytic tool capable of illuminating both the underlying institutional logics which shape collective decision making as applied to NGOs. We utilize grid-group cultural theory to explicate institutional structures and change within organizational fields. Anyone who seeks to understand the social actions of NGOs relative to other stakeholders in a particular organization field will benefit from applying the grid-group cultural framework. From the perspective of organization/administrative science, our models can inform NGOs' efforts to improve the likelihood of their successes. Additionally, emerging successes of NGOs in both policy and resource domains potentially provide a rich source of data for comparing NGO strategies and distinguishing between those most likely to succeed and fail. While our framework has been successfully applied to studies of cultures and public policy decision making, our application to the NGO literature is a unique contribution.

The development of our arguments will begin by examining the history and evolution of NGOs as they have expanded from the delivering of vital goods and services during times of crisis to entities involved in political negotiations, community development, environmental

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## Definition

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concerns, and other complex social movements. From there we explicate the foundational elements of grid-group cultural theory and its contributions to sociological, anthropological, and public policy research. While grid-group cultural theory is useful for revealing the institutional logics and cultural preference bundles which shape collective action, the framework fully blossoms when combined with theories of stakeholder politics and social movements. In our third section, we build on the foundation of grid-group cultural theory, by recognizing the contributions of social movement scholarship and stakeholder theorizing—in doing so we establish our model of stakeholder politics and insurgency. Finally, we sample two empirical studies predicated on grid-group cultural theory and demonstrate what NGOs can gain through the application of our framework. The benefits of the framework explicated herein coalesce in a more sophisticated understanding of behaviors of numerous stakeholders. From this understanding, potential alliance partners may be identified and NGOs and their allies may earn increased participation in public policy making. In general, understanding the array of social forces which contribute to collective decisions increases the likelihood of developing successful strategies for achieving message salience.

## THE EVOLVING NATURE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### Definition and Classification of NGOs

Although the term non-governmental organization is now common in public discourse, there are a variety of understandings about what NGOs really are. The two most widely used definitions for this term are those of the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank. The UN, in its recognition of NGOs, conceives of NGOs as private bodies that are neither commercial nor violent organizations, nor set up to replace governments, nor under the direct control of any government (Nalinakumari & MacLean, 2005). Meanwhile, the World Bank's definition of NGOs is more purpose-based in that it addresses NGOs as organizations which pursue activities to respond to welfare relief, pro-poor interests, environmental protection, and community services (World Bank, 1995). Vakil (1997), after reviewing a large body of literature on the definitions of NGOs, came to a "tentative structural operation definition" as he described NGOs as a number of private, self-governing organizations that work to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged people, driven by a commitment of shared values on a nonprofit basis. The quest for a universal and agreeable definition for NGOs became even more perplexing as NGOs have proliferated across different cultures in multi-national environments in various forms and intermingled deeply into the social sphere. However, beyond simply defining NGOs, it is also necessary to chart the evolutions of NGOs over time.

The wide array of definitions for the NGO sector also led to the problem in classifying NGOs. Overall, Vakil (1997) argued that there were two essential descriptors to classify NGOs: orientation and level of operation. The first descriptor was the framework of NGO generations constructed by Korten (1990), who placed NGOs into four generations. Korten's rationale for this categorization was based on the NGOs' functions throughout history. The four generations include welfare relief, community development, sustainable development, and people's movement. However, as obviously demonstrated in the real world, these



typologies do not provide a clear unit of analysis, because they become blurred when NGOs develop to incorporate more than just one orientation. Due to the growth of complex human problems, many NGOs have developed further strategies to accommodate their missions in a more effective manner. For example, Oxfam is a major actor in community development, fighting to justify corporate social responsibilities in many countries, aside from functioning in the role of a traditional direct aid-provider (Nalinakumari & MacLean, 2005). However, this classification was useful in that it helps to explain the roles of NGOs over time.

Vakil (1997) based his classification scheme on the "level of operation" to distinguish among types of NGOs, based on the scope of their geographic reach. This discussion was generated from the previous literature where "many analysts distinguished between community-based, national, and international NGOs" (p. 2063). He also added a fourth type of NGOs, which he called "regional NGOs" that served an entire region in the developing countries. Although Vakil (1997) went further to look at other contingent descriptors in an effort to include other possible classifications, such as sectoral focus, he commented that the classification of NGOs by their levels of operation was most likely to be mutually exclusive. As a result, NGOs' levels of operation would be an important independent variable in the study of NGOs' evolution.

### Evolution of NGOs as a Form of Organizing Collective Action

Iriye (1999) commented that the birth of international NGOs was conceived by the people's determination to develop new institutions to seek a more durable and just international order rather than the traditional sovereign state power. Some of the first NGOs were reported to be formed in Europe in the early 1800s in slavery-free movements (Nalinakumari & McLean, 2005). However, the formation of NGOs was better known during the two World Wars with the foundation of some charitable groups to support the victims of wars and natural disasters (Korten, 1990). The foundation of these organizations was based on people's voluntary responses to urgent humanitarian circumstances. The International Committee of Red Cross was founded during this period and become an icon for this NGO generation.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, hundreds of NGOs were founded and operated around the world. Their activism in the global arena contributed to the formation of the League of the Nations -- a precursor to the current United Nations (Nalinakumari & McLean, 2005). NGOs were especially effective in bridging global communication during the Cold War because of their nonpolitical, affiliation-based philosophy and their ability to promote communication, cooperation, and connect to the grass-root levels across national borders (Iriye, 2000). Throughout the twentieth century, NGOs have evolved beyond their traditional roles of welfare relief to take part in major social, economic, and political discussions (Korten, 1990). Increasingly NGOs and businesses are working together to forge useful alliances on Corporate Social Responsibility issues ranging from corporate citizenship to environmental concerns (Arya & Salk, 2006). The UN Charter allowed the NGOs to have official status at the UN as observers representing a large entity of civil society to raise concerns and ideas alongside the governmental and private sectors.

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Apart from the international progress, NGOs have also been recognized as important partners of the government and private sector including large financial and social institutions. For example, the World Bank and both bilateral and multilateral donors pressured governments to forge links with NGOs (Clarke, 1998). About 10 percent of international development aid was channeled through NGOs (Fernando & Heston, 1997). In some countries, such as Bangladesh, NGOs were claimed to present themselves as equal partners of the government in the field of poverty reduction (Lewis, 1997). The increasing roles of NGOs have drawn remarkable attention after a number of recent unprecedented global activist campaigns across the world. For example, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), a coalition of more than 1,000 NGOs in over 60 countries, led by Jody Williams of the Vietnam Veterans of American Foundation, launched a global campaign to ban the production, use, and stockpile of anti-personnel mines, which led to the Anti-personnel Mine Treaty signed by the majority of countries around the world. The campaign resulted in the Nobel Peace Prize for ICBL in 1997. Nowadays, NGOs' statements in international forums are powerful because they are seen as expressions of the people and the civil society (Fernando & Heston, 1997), and they work towards a people-centered vision (Korten, 1990). "Societies in developing countries are in dire conditions and in need of proactive, genuine and substantial efforts to alleviate social, economic, and environmental calamities" (Jamali & Keshishian, 2009, p. 278). NGOs are one of the means for addressing these societal disparities. For example, Akpabio (2009) revealed that NGOs specifically targeted toward women in Nigeria contributed to the empowerment of local women through financial gains, overall health awareness, and food preparation and processing abilities. In a nutshell, NGOs have achieved extraordinary influence and visibility in the global arena (Roff, 2004), and it would be a misread to the history of the twentieth century to not recognize the presence and the roles of NGOs in human society (Iriye, 1999). In order to understand the ways in which NGOs have influenced or shaped public policy or organizational field level decision-making, it is necessary to understand how NGOs themselves have been defined and have evolved over time.

An increasingly complex form of organizing for collective action, NGOs are one of many stakeholders seeking to influence decision-making regarding various levels of public policy or the policies of other organizational actors in a policy domain. As NGOs develop further in complexity and scope, they may benefit from the body of administrative science developed initially for use by complex public and private organizational forms. Since fourth generation NGOs focus on a multitude of complex human problems and sometimes act in concert with social movements in shaping discourse and action, stakeholder theorizing in organization analysis -- which also accounts for the essentially political nature of coalition formation and decision making -- shows great promise as a useful analytic tool.

### GRID-GROUP CULTURAL THEORY

An analytical framework worthy of the emerging importance of NGOs should be capable of modeling the environments in which those organizations attempt to pursue their missions. Such a framework must include, at least, the relevant complex of actors, relationships among them, and the competing rationalities that guide collective action in these organization fields.







information" (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, p. 30). The competing values framework was designed to capture the complexity of organizational culture. According to Cameron and Quinn (1999), the utility of the framework is that it is "empirically derived, has been found to have both face and empirical validity, and helps integrate many of the dimensions proposed by various authors" (p. 29). This formulation is very similar, but not identical, to the grid-group culture theory developed by social anthropologists.

Using the lens of culture, specifically, grid-group cultural theory to examine the social action tendencies of NGOs and other stakeholders in an organization field, we interpret these tendencies as artifacts of political struggle best understood as cultural expression. Grid-group cultural theory provides a means of recognizing political biases and assumptions which manifest themselves in specific organization action and, particularly, in rationales for those actions. Rather than focus exclusively on the social activities as enacted, grid-group cultural theory allows us to begin to explore the underlying structural and cultural dimensions which produce these collective actions.

### Applications

The utility of grid-group cultural theory as a tool for understanding the assumptions various social actors bring to bear while engaged in decision making practices is well documented. The theory has been applied to numerous examinations of influence and policy making during discussions ranging from environmental issues (Thompson, 1984; Thompson & Warburton, 1985; Verweij, Douglas, Ellis, Engel, Hendriks, Lohmann, Ney, Rayner, & Thompson, 2006; Gyawali & Dixit, 2001; Verweij, 1999), to conflict (Gyawali, 1999; Richards, 1999), to language and family structures (Mamadouh, 1999; Mamadouh, 2002) to political decision making within government (Faucher, 1999; Stenvoll, 2002). While specific findings of each of these studies can be examined separately, most relevant to the current discussion are the findings relating to the overall usefulness of grid-group cultural theory as an overarching framework. According to Verweij (1999), existing frameworks "are not well-positioned to explain why (or even describe how) [social] actors shift from one pattern of behavior and thought into another. Grid-group theory spells out various rationalities and is therefore better placed to explain [social] change" (pp. 460-461). In applying the theory to the study of party politics, Foucher (1999) concluded that cultural theory is useful for predicting how political parties are likely to evolve and identifying what cultural biases and traits these parties are likely to display. "Political culture influences all aspects of planning, policy analysis, and policy making. That is why political culture is potentially such a powerful source of understanding, explanation, and prediction" (Swedlow, 2002, p. 268).

Grid-group cultural theory provides us with a set of institutional logics underlying all social formations. As scholars of social and political organization have repeatedly identified these institutional logics in various domains of collective action, NGOs can recognize their presence in policy domains to aid their attempts to identify influential actors and develop strategies to influence them. The presence of these competing logics in social structures and the collective nature of their formation and maintenance provide an entry point for NGOs to influence institutional development in policy domains and, thereby, influence policy outcomes. This opportunity forms the basis for our general model of stakeholder politics and insurgency, which we introduce next, and provides NGO's a blueprint for mapping the



institutional structure of policy domains and for establishing a positive, influential role in policy-making.

### A POLITICAL-CULTURAL APPROACH TO STAKEHOLDER THEORIZING

Scholars began, in the 1980s, to formulate a stakeholder approach to organizational governance, as an alternative to the neo-liberal presumption that organizations were predestined to benefit only shareholders. Early contributions to this form of theorizing attempted to codify a stakeholder-based strategic management system (Freeman, 1984) and a means of solving policy conflicts in organizations based on key managers' unstated assumptions regarding the preferences and priorities among stakeholders to specific organizational decisions (Mitroff, 1983). Freeman & Reed (1983) argued that stakeholder theorizing held the potential to develop a new, more democratic form of organizational governance than the autocratic form of managerial capitalism inspired by military-style 'command-and-control' hierarchies. Stakeholder theorizing added substantially to the explanatory power of administrative theory, characterizing organization as necessarily consisting of contending priorities which create differences among decision-makers, and specifying pattern to the seemingly random nature of stakeholder representation among organizational contenders (Mitroff, 1983). Stakeholder theorizing, in short, recognized the inherently political nature of organizing processes by transforming amorphous organizations and their environments into specific actors having claims on organizational decisions and resources and contending among an identifiable set of stakeholders for preferential policy outcomes.

More recent developments in stakeholder theorizing have extended those earlier propositions to specify the conditions that determine the relative salience of stakeholders to organizational management (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997), the characteristics of organizational networks that render an organization more responsive to its stakeholders (Rowley, 1997), and the various strategies that stakeholders may adopt when attempting to resolve potential conflicts with the organization (Mattingly & Greening, 2003). A very recent contribution to this literature, however, holds particular promise for NGO's hoping to improve their abilities to positively influence public policy and organizational decision-making. Mattingly & Hall (2008) merged institutional theorizing and studies of social movements to inform their approach to stakeholder politics and insurgency. Consistent with institutional theory, their approach necessarily adopts the organization field as the relevant level of analysis for examining the complex of influences on organization policy. The thesis of their argument is that organizational stakeholders can use the tools of social movements to alter the institutional structure of organizational fields and, thereby, secure favorable policy outcomes. Our thesis is that NGOs, as stakeholders in organization fields, can also use these tools to secure favorable policy.

#### Institutional Structure of Organization Fields

An organization, including an NGO, must first understand the institutional structure of an organizational field as a pre-requisite to altering it (or adapting to it). Informed by

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institutional theorizing, Mattingly & Hall (2008) introduced institutional structures underlying organizational fields as consisting of 3 layers, including the actors (stakeholders) contending for favorable policy outcomes, alliances among these actors, and institutional logics – common among alliance partners but competing between contending alliances. Actors in the organizational field are observable. These are the stakeholders to policy issues whose interests are affected by policy outcomes and who are, therefore, party to contention over those policies. Alliances may be more difficult to observe, as these may be known only through self-report by the parties to the alliance. However, allies in policy contests may be temporary, shifting, or secret. Therefore, alliances may be better identified – or confirmed – by reference to the institutional logics offered by actors as reasons for their policy preferences. Although Mattingly & Hall (2008) identified the competing logics underlying institutional structure in advanced societies as capitalism, democracy, and bureaucracy (following Alford & Friedland, 1985), we prefer the more generalized model of elemental institutional logics offered by Cultural Theory (Douglas, 1986; Thompson et al., 1990). According to this model, base-level institutional logics represent alternative forms of governing social interaction, previously explained as stratified hierarchy, competitive individualism, sectarian egalitarianism, and fatalistic isolationism. An NGO must understand the configuration of institutional logics represented by allied actors contending for favorable policy in an organization field. However, only the actors are visible; solidarities among actors and the underlying institutional logics that bind them are visible only as actors explain their reasons for specific policy preferences.

### Institutional Change Processes

Actors can achieve a more lasting influence over policy in an organization field to the extent that they can alter the field's institutional structure in a manner that improves the salience, or resonance, of its preferences and its rationale for them. A sociological tradition of studying social movements has yielded 3 primary means for success of social movements: mobilization (or organization) of vital resources, political opportunity structures, and language-framing processes (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996). Recent scholarship on organizations and social movements has resulted in recognition that specified mechanisms of social change apply to distinct levels of institutional structure (McAdam & Scott, 2005). Actors wishing to influence an organization field's institutional structure can best do so by using these mechanisms of institutional change to alter specific elements of institutional structure as follows: First, an actor can attempt to mobilize other potential actors, or other resources, that may be latent in an organizational field. Pre-existing organizing structures may be particularly useful for this purpose. Second, an actor can create alliances with other, like-minded actors, persuade actors to adopt policy preferences (and, perhaps, rationales for them), or may recognize an opportunity to influence policy due to the dissolution of an opposing alliance or its de-legitimation in a policy domain. The purpose of the new alliance is to produce resonance in an organizational field of a previously de-emphasized institutional logic or, alternatively, a re-interpretation of a specific policy solution as consistent with a prevailing (hegemonic) logic. Finally, an actor can use language-framing processes to establish certain interpretations of events or policy alternatives that amplify the resonance of the actor's interpretation of problem and solution, thereby rendering the actor's proposal as







## APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK TO EXISTING EMPIRICAL STUDIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NGOS

### Rhine River Pollution

In 2002, Verweij successfully applied grid-group cultural theory to a historical examination of competing governments, businesses, and environmental groups over the pollution levels of the Rhine and their accumulated impact on the flora and fauna along the Rhine. By the early 1980s, multiple incidents, from the Netherlands recalling an ambassador from France in protest over dumping policies, to general uncooperative behaviors between government delegations from the riparian states and the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine against Pollution (ICPR), seemed to indicate intractable and irreconcilable differences among the various factions and groups with some stake in the condition of the Rhine. However, over the past twenty years, a different image of the various Rhine river stakeholders and the Rhine itself has emerged. The condition of the Rhine has improved remarkably, as have the collaborative relationships among the various stakeholders. Verweij (2002), using grid-group cultural theory to explain this shifting of stakeholder relationships that led to increased collaboration and more broadly accepted message salience, concluded that the addition of new, individualistic voices to the discussion, following the 1986 Sandoz chemical factory fire which resulted in the release of roughly 13,000 cubic meters of contaminated water into the Rhine, best explain the emerging consensus.

"The 'watershed on the Rhine' can be perceived as a shift from a hierarchical approach to international cooperation to an individualistic approach" (p. 455). As grid-group cultural theory reveals, the entry of new actors into the organization field overcame the limitations of the predominantly hierarchical social actors existing up to that point. Messages designed by the various stakeholders (hierarchical governments, egalitarian activist/environmental groups) which had heretofore proven unpersuasive among the most influential decision makers, combined with messages from the newly emerging voice of the individualists promising creative and innovative solutions to the Sandoz crisis, mobilized the various actors to collective agreements which had previously eluded them. A more collaborative, sustainable, and successful approach to controlling Rhine river pollution was not the result of governments representing the hierarchical way of seeing the world enacting solutions from their entrenched perspective, but the "highly effective combination of an individualistic approach to international cooperation with hierarchical plans for environmental management" (p. 460).

### Water Conflict in the Ganga Plains

Many of the citizens of the north Indian State of Bihar have experienced deleterious effects on their quality of life due to their reliance on the waters of the Ganga river (Gyawali, 1999). As more populous regions further north utilize much of the resources that the river supplies, the amount and quality of the water available to citizens in Bihar has decreased. Essentially, the capital of Bihar, Patna, approaches the Ganga water problems from the same hierarchical perspective as the New Delhi government in Delhi, well upstream from the



problems of Bihar. The two governments see the problem as state level pursuits with the primary stakeholders being the two state bureaucracies. Predictably, social and environmental activists on both the local and state level define the problem quite differently than the state governments. Activists aren't concerned about water rights on a major river, but rather their concern focuses on "the degradation and destruction of fertile farmlands and the havoc wrought on large numbers of poor people as a result of wrong technological choice for harnessing water" (Gyawali, 1999, p. 445). These competing cultural biases stem from the institutional logics which govern each group's way of seeing and interpreting the world.

Grid-group cultural theory tells us that each group will define the problem in a way that is consistent with the lenses and institutional frameworks which govern their behavior. The hierarchical state actors are "sensitive to the issue of water rights at the 'national' level," but are "almost wholly insensitive to the same issue at the local level" (p. 448). On the other hand, activist groups, such as the Flood Liberation Movement, representing the egalitarian cultural quadrant, find themselves competing for message salience with the state machinery and all of the funding, resources, and biases it is able to bring to bear on the situation. According to Gyawali (1999), water conflict on the Ganga plains is no longer one where a single dominant voice, the hierarchical state, controls and shapes the discussion. The voice of the egalitarian social and environmental activist groups has been gaining in strength as members of the marginalized fatalist group, pushed far enough into poverty or degradation, responded by mobilizing into village level activists, such as the *Senas* and *Abhiyans*. Additionally, in the case of the Ganga plains, the hierarchical power of the state is further eroded by the emergence of economic liberalization efforts across the region—efforts which reinforce the individualistic market approach to decision making. The strategy of markets "is not control as it is with the hierarchy: instead its strategy is to break free of all controls so as to enhance individual freedom to network and profit" (Gyawali, 1999, p. 449). Now that public policy has become a contested domain consisting of markets, hierarchies, and egalitarians, the potential for strategic alliances is fully realized. Grid-group cultural theory provides a useful theoretic and conceptual tool for understanding the competing factions, as well as the coalition building potential, among the various stakeholders committed to social action within this particular domain.

### Implications for NGOs

Through this framework, we are able to see the various stakeholders and social actions that led to particular public policies. What we can learn is that stakeholders who are able to identify the actors present in an organization field and then cluster the actors according to institutionalized logics expressed in policy preferences, are better able to recognize unfulfilled needs and potential alliances based on existing rationales. The ability to do so will dramatically increase a stakeholder's ability to achieve message salience. Therefore, applying a cultural approach to the analysis of stakeholder politics within a particular public policy domain provides researchers with the means for recognizing and interpreting stakeholder behaviors and collective action. More importantly for the present discussion, applying a cultural approach to the analysis of stakeholder politics in this manner provides practitioners, in this case NGOs, with a conceptual device for identifying social actors and the cultural biases which guide their behaviors, as well as a strategic model for mobilizing resources.

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the institutional logics that shape collective decision making as NGOs and other stakeholders within a particular policy domain compete and collaborate while engaging in social actions and creating messages most likely to resonant with others in the field. Our framework can guide that research to useful conclusions. For NGOs, our framework not only helps lead to healthy functioning within an NGO, by revealing their own institutional logics and cultural biases, but also facilitates understanding of the other institutional logics guiding the behavior of the other members within a public policy domain. Significantly, an organization that recognizes the governing logics of various competing factions in a policy domain is best-suited to influence the development of policy.

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